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*The obligation of doing as we would be done by,
recommended from the consideration of its ex-
cellency, in creating peace in the mind, and
establishing happiness among all communities
of men.*

A
S E R M O N

Preached in the
PARISH CHURCH
OF
St. ANDREW, HOLBORN,
On January the 30th. 1755.

B E I N G

The Day appointed to be observed as the Anniversary of
the MARTYRDOM of

King CHARLES the First.
Thomas

By the Reverend Mr. SMITH,
Preacher of the Sunday Morning Lecture at St. Giles's,
Cripplegate, and the Thursday Afternoon Lecture
in the same Church.

The FOURTH EDITION,
To which are added, some Observations on the Usefulness
of REASON in Matters of RELIGION.

L O N D O N:
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in Hatton-Garden. 1763.



TO THE
Rev^d Mr. BARTON,

Rector of St. ANDREW, Holborn,

AND

Chaplain to Her Royal Highness the
PRINCESS of WALES.

Reverend SIR,

THIS Sermon, published at the request of several persons who heard it, is, with the utmost deference, submitted to your Judgment. This I do the more willingly, as knowing that you are neither apt to find fault, nor hasty in censuring any performance, which you have reason to believe well intended. Give me leave, Sir, to assure you, that my intention was such, and, I hope, that this will be admitted as an excuse for any imperfection in the discourse.

Here, I might justly expatiate on the many eminent virtues with which you are endued, such as tenderness and compassion for the unfortunate, and

readiness to help all who stand in any need of assistance. But I forbear ; knowing that minds like yours, feel more pleasure in doing good actions, than in hearing encomiums on them. However, I, who have had such great experience of your candour and generosity, cannot, without being guilty of the breach of gratitude, pass over in silence, the repeated favours which you have so bountifully bestowed on me, since I have had the honour to assist you in the ministry.

I am,

Reverend SIR,

With the most real and unfeigned regard,

Your most obliged, and

Most faithful humble servant,

THOMAS SMITH.



M A T T. vii. 12.

*Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you,
do ye even so to them, for this is the law and
the prophets.*



HIS rule of *doing to others as we
would they should do to us*, is so rea-
sonable and just in itself, that un-
less men are vitiated, through the
prevailing power of self-love, or
prejudiced in favour of some avaricious or dar-
ling passion, they must readily consent to the
equitableness of this duty, and without any
doubts or scruples immediately set about the
performance of it. This benevolent precept of
our blessed Saviour is wrote in every man's
breast, is so plain and legible, that it needs no
comment, nor wants any other interpreter than
his own pressing exigencies and continual ne-
cessities to explain and inforce the obligation.
Moreover, this rule of equity is founded on
the immutable law of justice, which is the
supreme virtue of human life, and most re-
splendent glory of our intellectual nature, and
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comes up gradually to resemble, in a degree, the glorious attributes of the Deity; by it we are commanded to do what reason requires, and omit no duty that it enjoins; for then we shall be enabled to practise both our civil and domestic concerns with peace, tranquility, and applause. Acting as we ought, in these different stations of life, we shall procure the approbation of all with whom we have to do, and be able to maintain a good understanding among men.

The dealing by one another as this law of right directs, will procure such a delightful harmony among rational and intelligent beings, as will recommend us to the unerring Distributer of all things, and make us acceptable to the supreme Lord of universal nature, who governs the world in righteousness, and will finally administer the laws of truth with equity and impartiality: So that according to the opinion of our Divine Legistator, he only should be reputed truly religious who is the most righteous, for christian righteousness is not to be measured by the rigour of the law, but by that general rule of equity delivered by the just and merciful Redeemer of the world, * *whatsoever*
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* For God, as Dr. Scot observes, is invariably inclined to do all that right reason obliges him to, by the essential rectitude of his own nature; and herein consists all his moral perfections, which is nothing else but the immutable inclination of his nature to do whatever is just, good, and reasonable; so that while we live according to the eternal laws of morality, we trace and imitate the moral perfections

ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them, for this is the law and the prophets; that is, true christian love and benevolence is not confined to those of our own party, nor restrained to the narrow limits of our family, but is communicated and also disinterested and free, without any guile or selfish views or advantageous designs, by serving others to serve ourselves; therefore, if we would act agreeably to the gospel scheme, and the generous example of our munificent Master, we must do good to all, it matters not to whom, whether they are members of the same church, or of a contrary persuasion; be their differences what they will, they are men made after the similitude of God, and ransomed with the precious blood of Christ;
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tions of God, and we live in our place and station, at the same rate, and by the same rule that God doth in his. We do as God himself would do, if he were in our place, and what the Son of God did do when he was in our nature, and there is no difference between his life and ours, but what necessarily arises out of our different states and relations. Vol. II. p. 59, 60. Edit. 10.

Therefore, says this judicious divine, should we erect to God a temple more magnificent than Solomon's, and load his altars with thousands of sacrifices, and make it perpetually ring with psalms and resounding choirs of hallelujahs, it would not be comparably so great an honour to him, as to convert your own souls into living temples, and make them the habitations of his glory and perfections: For he values no sacrifices like those of an obedient will, delights in no choir like that of pure and heavenly affections, nor hath God in all his creation an ensign of honour so truly worthy of him as that of a divine and godlike soul; a soul that reflects his image and shines his own glory upon him.
p. 57, 58.

for which reasons they are objects of our regard, and we ought not to withhold any necessities from them that we can conveniently spare, but render to every man his just due, and so to order and proportion our charity as right reason shall direct and require. Had this rule been strictly observed, all that bigotry and superstition, all those horrid rebellions and barbarous massacres which have stained the christian world with blood, would have been entirely prevented, and we should have had no occasion to commemorate the mournful tragedy, which was acted on this day, by wicked and blood-thirsty men, whom nothing would satisfy but to imbrue their hands in the blood of their lawful sovereign, and the utter destruction of monarchy; but lest I should create disturbance in the breast of any one in this audience, by relating the detestable fact, I willingly draw a veil over the cruel and inhuman action, and proceed to shew, that it is wholly owing to our breaking in upon this unalterable law of right, and a disregard to those divine principles which the God of nature has engraven on our souls, that this world is become the seat of anarchy and confusion.

All mankind are endued with a principle of reason and understanding, by the benevolent Author of their beings, which will, by reflection, enable them to * discern the beauty of doing what

* If then he who resembles God most, is likely to understand him best, it must be as archbishop Tillotson observes,

what is right, and acquaint them with the pleasure and satisfaction, that must necessarily follow the constant and faithful discharge of it. This rule of truth and equity, is of so extensive a nature, that it descends from the throne to the cottage. It binds the prince to protect his subjects, and keeps him from encroaching upon the liberties of his people. It secures the subject in obedience to his prince, and makes him steadily to persevere in his allegiance.

This rule of action does not only adjust and settle our deportment towards one another, but it likewise prompts us, to the exercise of the several duties we owe to God, our neighbour, and ourselves, the violation of which rule, and acting in continual opposition to it, must unavoidably disturb the beautiful order of nature, subvert the very being of society, and change this stage of life into a theatre of strife and contention; by which means, no one will be able to keep his just rights, or to preserve his legal property, any longer than till another, has it in his power to oppress him, or an opportunity by art, to force from him what he had a lawful right to detain. In thus

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serves, because he finds those perfections in some measure in himself, which he contemplates in the divine nature, and nothing gives a man so sure a notion of divine things, as practice and experience. Every good man is in some degree partaker of the divine nature, and feels that in himself, which he conceives to be in God; so that this man does experience, what others do but talk of, he feels the image of God in himself, and is able to discourse of him, from an inward sense and feeling of his excellency. Ser. Vol. III. p. 42.

preverfly opposing the principles of religion, we must of consequence destroy God's moral government, and make this world a scene of fraud and oppression, a true representation of war and bloodshed, where we should behold all that good order and delightful harmony which had subsisted among understanding creatures, torn up by civil feuds, intestine heats, and continual dissensions. This must greatly grieve the humane heart, and sensibly afflict the benign peaceable soul, to see the inhabitants, of a once well regulated kingdom, become intire strangers to the practice of righteousness, and utterly unacquainted with that tenderness and compassion which we ought to have for one another. By means of these continual tumults, men divest themselves of humanity, grow unconcerned for the loss of those invaluable blessings of peace and happiness, which were enjoyed in times past, by observing the laws of justice and equity.

Men, by abusing the powers of their souls, and perverting the faculties of their bodies, are so intensively busied in the service of iniquity, that they cannot hearken to the powerful commands of truth. And though these faculties were bestowed upon them, by the beneficent parent of the universe, to the intent that they should be employed as instruments to promote sobriety and temperance here, and used as means to prepare them for that state of perfect bliss and concord which exists eternally in the glorious realms of futurity; yet, they are industriously employed to support the cause of iniquity

iniquity, and to carry on the most pernicious designs. These things must be vastly displeasing to a truly rational mind, and very offensive to God; whose delight is only among such as live in unity, peace, and love, and in the constant exercise of all moral and social virtues.

From what has been said, we may be thoroughly convinced, of the dreadful mischief which ensues, when men depart from the laws of reason; and that all the wickedness in the world, must be entirely ascribed to our not keeping the sensitive appetites under the power thereof. Moreover, we frequently feel the sad effects of humouring our wild passions, and exercising illegal gratifications; because they commonly distract the soul, and put furious creatures, upon such desperate projects to obtain their insatiable desires, as often makes the human species sensible of its terrible consequences: therefore we should be very assiduous in suppressing our exorbitant appetites, and use all possible methods to reduce them to obedience, lest they should get the ascendant over our intellectual faculties, and dethrone the noble principles of reason; for when men have got loose from the government of truth, they think themselves under no obligation to obey its faithful admonitions, but are wholly at liberty to do whatever their sinful lusts require, without paying any regard to the secret reproofs of conscience.

When the passions of men are once inflamed, they care not what acts of violence they commit; nor do revengeful spirits heed, how

outrageously they behave towards their fellow-creatures, when bent upon pursuing their envious intentions : then they rush forward, like the horse into the battle, not regarding either age or sex, quality or rank, but trample on all before them. So it is with a furious man, he makes no difference between the virtuous and prophane, nor pays any more respect to persons of the highest dignity, than to those in the lowest station ; if he can but discharge his malice upon the objects of his wrath, he values not how cruel or inhuman the means are to obtain it. And though his barbarity does not always terminate in the ruin of such only as are the mark of his angry resentment ; yet, he is resolved upon executing his direful displeasure, even at the expence and hazard of his own life.

These calamitous circumstances men are frequently plunged into, by not submitting to the forcible power of justice and equity. Likewise, all that disorder introduced into the mind, is occasioned by the working of tumultuous passions, and their rejecting the unerring reports of truth, which are always ready to assist and instruct mankind in every thing that makes for their peace and tranquility. From this source arises contempt of the majesty of God. The want of reverence for the sacred laws of the deity, and these wicked resolutions of not hearkening to, and obeying of, the divine commands. All which evils, are the result of a disobedient and rebellious mind.

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This is the spring from whence proceed blasphemy and impiety, lying and perjury, together with that unnatural enmity which is too often carried on in private families, to the destruction not only of those in being, but also to the ruin of their posterity. It is for want of attending to, and complying with, the unerring injunctions of truth, that ambitious princes commonly engage in war, and cruel tyrants, through disregarding its equitable precepts, are encouraged to encounter the most barbarous enterprizes. The neglecting to observe this sacred director, is the cause that blood-thirsty emperors have made such slaughter among men; that public communities and kingdoms have been depopulated, and the most beautiful and wealthy provinces reduced to so low a condition, that the small number of inhabitants left, were never able to recover their riches, or support their former glory.

Reason * is the brightest perfection of the Deity, and chiefest excellency of the rational soul;

* For reason, says Dr. SCOT, being the glory and crown of human nature, hath a natural right to command and dispose of its motions, to be the eye of its will, and the guide of its affections, the law of all its powers and actions. And indeed for what other use serves the reason of a man, but to prescribe rules to his unreasonable affections, to light and direct them to their proper objects, as they are moving towards them, to moderate their excesses, to quicken their defects, and to lead them on to true happiness, in an even course, through all the wild mazes of popular mistake, and unless it be thus employed, the man is reasonable in vain,

soul ; by this divine principle we are taught to exercise Justice and Equity ; but if once this ray of the divinity in man is disarmed of its power, then its authority is slighted and despised,

vain, and his light is spent in an useless unprofitable blaze. If therefore we would arrive at our own perfection, it must be by following our reason, and submitting all our affections and appetites to its government. For what else can be the perfection of a rational nature, but to be perfectly rational ? and what is it to be perfectly rational, but to have our minds thoroughly instructed with the principles of right reason, and our desires, and inclinations regulated by them ; for herein consists the supreme perfection of men and angels, yea, and of God himself, the crown and glory of whose nature it is, that he always knows, and acts what is best and most reasonable ; and when once our understanding is so far enlightened, that it always dictates right reason to us, and our appetites and affections are so far subdued as that they always freely and cheerfully complied with it, we have arrived at the height of our nature, and are commenced perfect men in Christ Jesus. Christ. life, vol. II. chap. 1. p. 11.

Let us not disparage our reason, nor neglect the use of our understanding, but apply ourselves to this discerning faculty, and obey its sacred dictates and unerring instructions. For divine revelation, says an eminent divine, doth not give men new faculties, but it propounds new objects to those faculties ; so that when God reveals any thing to us, he reveals it to our understanding, that we may judge concerning it, that we may not believe every spirit, but try whether they be from him or no. Now that which hath spoiled the lives of many men, is their assenting to such doctrines, as never came from the fountain of truth ; therefore to preserve our integrity, and keep to the truth, we must try the spirits, and compare the evidences men bring for what they assert, which it is not possible to do, but by the use of our reason : for to be confident and preremptory in any thing without reason, is nothing but obstinacy of mind ; whereas, if we discard reason, we level the best and most desirable doctrine in the world, with the vainest enthusiasm ;

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spised, and the criminal takes the liberty to indulge his vicious inclinations, without ever limiting the vehement desires of nature. Thus he continues to humour his boisterous passions,
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now by the principles of reason, we are not to understand the grounds of any man's philosophy, nor the critical rules of syllogism, but those fundamental notices that God hath planted in our souls; whereby we know that every thing is made for an end, and every thing is directed to its end by certain rules; these rules in creatures of understanding and choice, are laws, and in transgressing these is vice, and in obeying these is virtue. As for arguments from scripture against the use of reason, it is alledged, *that God will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and that the world by wisdom knew not God*; but by this wisdom is not meant the reason of mankind, but the traditions of the Jews, the philosophy of the disputing Greeks, and the policy of the Romans; all which the apostle sets at nought, because they were contrary to the simplicity and holiness, to the self-denial and meekness of the gospel. Secondly, it is said, *that the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*; by which words nothing more is intended, than that a man, who is guided by natural reason, and is not enlightened by divine revelation, cannot understand matters of pure revelation, but he thinks them absurd and foolish until they are made known to him by the revelation of the spirit of God, and when they are so, nothing appears in the mysteries of religion but what is agreeable to the soundest reason, and the purest wisdom. Thirdly, it is urged, that our reason is very liable to be misled by our senses and affections, by our interests and imaginations, so that many times we mingle errors and false conceits with the genuine dictates of our minds, and appeal to them as the principles of truth when they are the false conclusions of ignorance and mistake. All that can be inferred from hence is, that we ought not to be too bold in defining speculative and difficult matters, nor set our reasonings against the doctrines of faith. But this doth not tend to the discredit of reason in the object,
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not considering the mischief that will inevitably follow their not being subject to the sacred direction of truth, by which means he becomes so insensible of shame and modesty, that he
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that is those principles of truth which are written upon our souls, for if we may not use our understanding, scripture itself will signify either nothing at all, or very little to us, and therefore to decry the use of reason is to introduce atheism, for what greater advantage can the atheist have against virtue, than that reason is against the precepts of it? This will make our religion depend upon a warm fancy, and an ungrounded belief, so that it can stand only till a new conceit alter the scene of imagination. We must either use our reason, says the learned Bp. Cumberland, in the study of the scriptures, or we have no reason to study them at all, nor need we fear any evil consequences from such a practice; for all the doctrines of revelation, when freed from the errors of the mistaken, and the imposition of the designing part of its votaries, and taken as they stand in the scriptures themselves, free from all human figments, and unwarrantable deductions, will stand the test of reason; nor do I know, says this great prelate, a more disadvantageous idea that can be given of the christian religion, than to decry the use of reason in matters belonging thereto; for does not that seem to imply, that it is an unreasonable scheme, as being what will not stand the test of reason. Several points indeed there are in it which we cannot comprehend, which yet, that they are so, we have very good reason to believe, though we cannot solve all difficulties, or answer all objections that may be started about them, no more than we can explain all the difficulties that occur about self-existence, eternity, and immensity; which yet, we are very certain, are attributes that belong to some being that really exists. Such are the difficulties about the infinite divisibility of space, which yet is demonstrated, and those about liberty of which we have the same proof that we have of our own consciousness. See Cum. de legibus natura, p. 167. Eng. translation by Maxwel. Hartcliffe on moral and intellectual virtues, p. 278, 279, 280, 281. Second Edit.

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breaks through the bonds of human society, bears down all before him, and does as much as in him lies, change the tribes of intelligent beings into herds of brutal creatures. When men have thus violently broke through the rules of rectitude, they involve themselves in the utmost misery, and, like beasts of prey, do bite and devour one another; so that this world, which was designed for a habitation of righteousness, is, by contumacious offenders, turned into a wilderness of wild, and desperate savages, where neither the rights of God, nor the properties of men, can be preserved from the insolence of those sons of cruelty and blood-thirsty libertines, who no more regard the lives of their fellow-creatures, than they do the lives of so many cannibals.

Long indulged habits of sin, enervate the ideas of virtue, blind our understanding, and prejudice our judgment in favour of vice, to such a degree, that we become incapable of rightly using our rational faculties. This should caution us against complying with any thing that is evil, lest our precipitant wills hurry us into the intricate mazes of error, and we become familiar with the destructive powers of iniquity. When men have gained an intima-
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But after what has been said in defence of reason, and its usefulness in matters of religion, if our faculties are so impaired by the fall, and our understandings so darkened that we are incapacitated to discern our duty, and incapable of performing it, religion is rendered useless, and revelation of no service to mankind.

cy with the enemies of truth, they are often so corrupted with their poisonous instructions, that the most moving intreaties are not sufficient to divert them from putting those noxious principles in execution. If men are inflexibly bent upon pursuing wicked practices, the strongest arguments lose their weight and efficacy, nor will the most powerful reasoning alter their pernicious determinations: if they can accomplish their horrid designs, they value not how much they disturb the quiet and happiness of mankind.

Moreover, it is men's fond attachment to evil maxims, that causes them to lose all sense of their duty, and puts ambitious creatures upon searching after such devices, as are most likely to obtain their malignant desires. Such persons too frequently involve themselves and their posterity in the utmost extremity and distraction. And though I am very far from supposing, that all those who contributed towards bringing on, and promoting, the troubles of *Charles* the first, did, at the beginning of those troubles, act from any such evil principles, or intended to destroy the king, or make this nation the seat of war and oppression: yet, it is greatly to be feared, by what followed, that the actions of the general part proceeded from no other views, than their own private interest and advancement to power. Because, had honour and honesty, the good of their country, and advantage of their fellow-creatures, been the prevailing spring
of

of action, they must have produced quite different effects from what they did. For reason teaches, that the matter is so ordered by the wisdom of providence, in the ordinary course of things, that virtuous principles do produce good actions, and vicious principles are the sources of evil actions; this truth both reason and experience does abundantly confirm *. Therefore, let us strictly adhere to the practice of moral virtue, and never deviate from the rules of unalterable rectitude, but live in constant obedience to the profitable injunctions of our rational powers: because these immutable rules are the same at all times, and in all places; and we can no more change the relation we bear to God, and one another, than we can overturn or alter the

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* Moral goodness, says the excellent Dr. SCOT, is the great stamp and impress that renders men current in the esteem of God. Whereas, on the contrary, the common brand by which hypocrites, and false pretenders to religion are stigmatized, is their being zealous for the positives, and cold and indifferent as to the morals of religion. Morality has been the end of all God's dispensations, from the beginning of the world, and will be observed by every virtuous mind, when all the solemn forms of religious worship shall cease. Love and charity will endure after time shall have finished her course, and revolving seasons shall be no more; when this great globe, with all its astonishing magnificence, shall lose its beauty, and this grand and stupendous fabric shall be totally destroyed; piety and virtue will be the delightful employment of angels, and the everlasting exercise of our glorified nature. So that however some men may treat morality, yet it is what God principally requires of them, and therefore it should be their chiefest concern, and the principal business of their lives.

constitution and natural order of the physical and moral system. Besides, there is nothing in this world, can make us absolutely miserable, except acting contrary to the order of the universe, and indulging perverse dispositions; neither is there any thing that can make us truly happy, but the continual observation of rational truths, and the exercise of such duties as infinite wisdom has appointed, to enforce the obligation of them. The steady observance of those rules, will preserve that delightful harmony of love and good-will, which ought to subsist among reasonable beings, and we shall experience the benefits of those invaluable blessings to our inexpressible satisfaction, and comfort.

We must not permit our jarring passions to invade the dominion of reason, lest they should raise a mutiny in the mind, and suppress its divine authority. Did men but experimentally feel the satisfactory pleasure of doing what is right, they would never be prevailed on to do any thing that is wrong. Our faithful adherence to the dictates of reason, and the constant exercise of true religion, will create a divine harmony in the soul, and preserve such an awful sense of the majesty of God, as will dispose us at all times readily to comply with, and heartily conform to the rule *of doing to others as we would they should do unto us*. By these means the honour of the Deity is best vindicated, and the authority of his laws secured from contempt: the dignity of human nature

nature is most strongly supported, and the good government of society is fixed on its stable foundation. This rule of equity so immoveably settles all mankind in their civil and religious rights, that the gratification of depraved appetites, will never be able to deprive them of their blessed privileges, nor powerful enough to divert them from obeying the commands of their righteous Law-giver and divine Instructor.

If men desire to be happy, they must forsake their transgressions, change the corrupt inclinations of the heart, and live in constant subjection to the will of the all-comprehending mind. This will restore the order of nature to its beauty, prevent us from falling into many destructive vices, and be an expedient to preserve us, not only from vast numbers of temptations, with which we are frequently assaulted ; but also we shall feel the inestimable happiness of being possessed with a substantial good, and such a durable felicity as can never be destroyed. These things discover the folly of such, as expect to enjoy either present or future blessedness, without discharging faithfully the several duties they owe to God and their neighbour ; because to act contrary to those laws which the supreme Being has established, is to destroy the design of our creation, and render ourselves unworthy that eminent station, in which providence has placed us, by sinking our natures into the low condition of brutes. So that if we would obtain

tain true happiness, or support ourselves in that honourable rank of beings we are in, it must be by strictly observing those rules of reason and conscience, which are as durable as our natures, and determined by the bountiful author of them, to be a guide and director to all his reasonable creatures, during the longest period of time, and the endless ages of eternity. Therefore, let none propose any inward peace to themselves from sensual gratifications, or the performance of any thing but what is equitable and just; because tranquility of mind is only to be had by the exercise of virtue. If men would enjoy a lasting felicity, it must proceed from the exercise of religion, the sense of their maker's favour, and the hopes of being invested with a crown of unperishing glory. The satisfaction arising from the belief and practice of these things, will alleviate the weight of every trouble, and abide by us, when the fervour of the affections shall grow cold and languid; virtue will be a reviving light within, when all is dark and gloomy without.

Were men but universally resolved to obey the command mentioned in the text, the plan of God's moral government would be perfectly restored. The great end of our redemption by Christ entirely answered, and all mankind would live in unity and love, and this world be, what providence intended it to be, a paradise of rational pleasures, and a kingdom of social and benign beings.

Thus

Thus I have shewn, that all the real pleasure which is to be had in this life, is by the constant discharge of our duty ; and that all the malevolence and want of good will towards one another, must be ascribed to our disregarding that christian precept of *doing as we desire to be done by*. For which reason, let us banish out of our minds acrimony and bitterness of spirit, and bury in oblivion all our party-quarrels and debates. If men would but eradicate all those malignant roots of contention, they no longer would dispute so vehemently about the externals of religion, but all unite as one man, and strive who shall exert himself most, in the cause, of internal piety, in the love of God and our neighbour, which is the life and soul, the essence and spirit of all true religion *. I speak
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* Were men more zealous for the interest of virtue, and for promoting the important duties of morality, they would be less anxious about unprofitable speculations, and needless inquiries into matters of religion, the indulging of which, serves only to feed mens pride, and add fuel to the flames of contention ; till at length they become so excessively fond of fruitless questions, that they disparage the practical truths of the gospel, and overlook the bright image of Christ, as not worthy their notice or regard. For while their thoughts are employed on intricate disputations, and subtle distinctions, they puzzle themselves, and distract others, take off their attention from the one thing needful, and from observing the essential parts of religion, that is, such parts as provoke to love and good works, and make us wise unto everlasting salvation. Search the bible throughout, and you shall not find one promise made to knowledge or wisdom, abstracted from the practice of real goodness and internal piety. Action, is that which must crown all our studies, and what our blessed law-giver said to his disciples, is true of every christian ; “ If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them,”
therefore

it with great concern, and do verily believe, if the teachers of the several denominations of christians, did less insist on the singular doctrines, and peculiar forms of their own sect, and were more ardent in inculcating the plain truths of the gospel, and the observance of universal righteousness, and disinterested benevolence, debauchery and prophaneness, would soon decline, and we should quickly see honesty, and sincerity, abound among us. Therefore, let us not make ritual services equally sacred with God and goodness, extensive mercy and love; because, without the exercise of these amiable and moral virtues, all our pretences to religion are but a fraudulent mask, drawn over the most shameful and flagrant hypocrisy.

Let us not deal deceitfully with God, before whose awful tribunal we shall all be shortly summoned to appear, or imagine that we can conceal our iniquities, from his penetrating eye, which pervades the world, and searches the most private recesses of our souls, or act treacherously with our brethren, but do, in all respects, by them, as we would have them do by us; lest some unforeseen stroke from the hand of providence should suddenly come upon us,
and

therefore let us not be wise above what is written, but content ourselves with what God has revealed, and no longer waste our time, under colour of unfolding the secrets of providence, or explaining the inexplicable mysteries of religion. In this state of moral discipline and probation, it would discover infinitely greater wisdom in us, to learn and practise our duty, than to spend our valuable moments, about uncertain, and unprofitable conjectures.

and in the midst of our dissimulation, plunge us into a woful eternity.

Let us use all possible means to preserve peace and unanimity in our borders, that we may be kind and affectionate to those, who differ from us in matters of religion, and treat them with the same candour and love, which we desire they should treat us with, were we in their situation; for we are all dependent beings, from him that wields the sceptre, to him that swings the flail; all are the children of one common parent, who has made of one blood all the nations of the earth; so that the most considerable creature can no more continue in being than the minutest, independent of God, who is the original of all causes, and fountain of all perfection: therefore let us not only adore his goodness for cloathing us with existence, but act suitably to that station, in which the wisdom of providence has placed us; because this will best discover the sense of our dependency on him, and of his power and benignity in our preservation and protection.

If we desire to enjoy the blessings of peace, and continue in the possession of our civil and religious rights, we must abhor and abominate the sin of rebellion, and pay all dutiful allegiance to our gracious sovereign King GEORGE, whom the benevolent father of the universe has in his great mercy placed upon the throne of these kingdoms. A prince whose resplendent virtues, and excellent qualities, can only be equaled by a few, but are not to be excelled by

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any, who has all the justice in his nature that injured innocence can wish for, and all the benignity that penitent offenders can implore ; but none of that revengeful cruelty which hurries delinquents to judgment, or any of that unseasonable compassion and lenity for the incorrigible, which must necessarily intercept the streams of justice, and hinder them from flowing in the right channel : a prince, who not only takes care to reward his faithful friends, but is also more assiduous in securing the liberties of his people, than in preserving the prerogative of the crown. During his auspicious reign, not one instance can be produced of his having acted by despotic authority ; but all his proceedings are by the rules of parliament, as being the most sure method to support the subject in his undoubted privileges, and transmit the constitution safe, with all its ancient rights, down to posterity. Therefore, let us give him our hearts and affections, for so long as we steadfastly adhere to his mild and just administration, we can have nothing to fear from him ; all the evil that we have to fear, is from our intestine heats, and unhappy divisions among ourselves. These are the things which weaken the interest of our friends, strengthen the hands of our enemies, and expose us to the insult of popery and arbitrary power, by which means we become an easy prey to the wrath of merciless princes : and it must be confessed, with shame too, that the fury of envious priests, hath often joined with kings to erect bloody inquisitions, those sacred slaughter-

slaughter-houses, the walls of which are conscious upon what slight occasions, fires of martyrdom are kindled, and millions murdered, under pretence of zeal for the glory of God, and an ardent desire to promote the welfare of the pretended catholick church. So that if ever a prince of the *Romish* communion, should wear the *British* crown, which God grant that none ever may, the church of *England*, which was always looked upon as the bulwark of the reformation, and a sanctuary to protect distressed protestants, would be the first that must fall a sacrifice to papal cruelty.

In fine, let us make it appear to the whole world, that we are, what we pretend to be, hearty friends to the illustrious house of *Hanover*; that we do believe indeed, what we have in the most solemn manner, sworn we do believe, that the powers that be, are ordained of God, and that the sole right is in his present majesty, and that there is none in any other person, and this we have declared to be our belief, in the most plain, and obvious sense of the words of the oath, upon the faith and belief of a christian.

Let us not, therefore, by any sort of vile and monstrous prevarication, make the solemnest ties, that the wisdom of man can find out, no ties at all; let us not resist the ordinance of God, but follow peace with all men, and holiness *, without which no man shall see

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* Let none then imagine that presuming on the sacrifice of Christ will atone for impenitent transgressors, or that assenting

the Lord ; and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lust thereof ; nor allow ourselves in any corrupt, or criminal indulgencies ; for where sin and iniquity are cherished, or kept alive,

assenting to the truths of the gospel, will free men from acts of charity and munificence, or from using their best efforts to conquer worldly desires, and keep off its impure solicitations ; No, religion must be our own act, or we shall receive no benefit from it ; God has furnished us with sufficient powers to discharge our duty, and therefore, he expects those powers should be employed to his glory, which is the chief happiness, and final salvation of man.

Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap ; The pretence of being clothed with Christ's righteousness, while we continue deceitful or unjust, will signify no more to our happiness than it would to be clothed with the richest apparel, while we are tortured with the gout, or racked with the stone, or any other acute pain ; for so long as sin reigns in the soul we shall feel its smart, and go where we will, shall not only carry with us a severe scourge, but deprive ourselves also of that salutary principle, which would comfort us in every calamity of life, and support us, when under the immediate apprehensions of death.

Moreover, the supreme director, and awful judge of the world, has peremptorily declared that he will not bestow the privileges of his spiritual kingdom upon any, but such as truly obey the laws thereof, and conform to that rectitude of mind, which is of eternal, and of immutable obligation, because justice and fidelity, mercy and love, are the sum and substance, the essence and spirit of all true religion ; for the defence whereof, all positive institutions were principally intended, and for the restoration whereof, all revealed religion was ultimately designed, and therefore all doctrines, whatsoever, supported by what pretence of reason or authority soever, if they are inconsistent with, or prejudicial to the rules of virtue and morality, are as absolutely false as God almighty is true.

* Presumptuous offenders may value themselves upon an imaginary knowledge of God's decrees, and understanding the surprizing methods, and unfathomable depths of providence,

alive, there will be perpetually strife and en-
vyings, confusion, and every evil work. Let
us study to lead quiet and peaceable lives in all
godliness and honesty. This will form in our
minds

providence, separate from the practice of virtue, but as
sure as the gospel is true, no such pretensions to wisdom or
knowledge will be of any benefit to them at that tremen-
dous period, the righteous judgment of God, when he
shall fix the decisive doom of every creature, by eternally
banishing impenitent sinners from his presence, and final-
ly investing every virtuous mind with a glorious crown of
immortality: and therefore, if gospel precepts are so in-
terpreted, that they undermine the invariable rules of recti-
tude, they are perverted; or if its doctrines are so represent-
ed as to be of any service to sinners without repentance and
the exercise of morality, they are abused and blasphemed.

The great business of christianity, is to change our hearts
and restore our depraved natures to their primitive purity and
perfection, without this all the blessings of heaven and earth
are not sufficient to make us happy: for while our minds
are debauched with unreasonable lusts, and our souls de-
filed with impure passions, we must be miserable, notwith-
standing all that God has done for us. Misery is so essen-
tial to sin, and so opposite to the divine purity, that we may
as well be men without being reasonable, as sinful men
without being miserable. By which it is evident, that the
end of publishing the gospel, this divine benevolent system
of mercy, was to dispense God's greatest blessings to man-
kind, and the greatest blessing that we can receive from
God, is to be redeemed from our iniquities, that we may
walk in newness of life, and be made partakers of the
divine nature. Hence the appellation of Jesus was given
him by the direction of an angel, signifying that he should
save his people from their sins. This undertaking was so
transcendently great, that none in heaven or earth was
esteemed worthy to be employed in it, but the ever blessed
Son of God, and therefore this was the principal business
of his life, and the center in which all his sufferings and
actions met, that we might be inspired with a holy emula-
tion, and pursue our duty with the utmost vigour and a-
lacrity. Christ by his offering is said to purge our consci-
ences

minds a due submission to the Divine Will, create a most sincere and friendly harmony among ourselves, and establish the most generous and extensive munificence to one another.

When

ences from dead works to serve the living God, and unless his death has this blessed effect upon us, and we live under the divine influences; it is not all the merit of his blood, nor the efficacy of his sacrifice, that can silence the severe rebukes of conscience, or deliver us from the direful punishment of sin, either in this world or in the next.

Would you save your souls from perdition, and enjoy present peace and future felicity, you must abandon the foul and slippery ways of vice, and walk in the safe and beautiful paths of virtue, or otherwise, whatever Christ has done upon earth, or is now doing in heaven, will be so far from forwarding your happiness, that it will prove an aggravation of your misery, and greatly increase and enhance your condemnation; for if there be such a happiness reserved in heaven, as the sacred writers describe, then doubtless if we expect to be partakers of it, we must be internally good, and sincerely upright in our profession, or we shall never enter the celestial paradise; because he that is the donor of this blessedness, is a God that *searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins*, is a curious observer of our thoughts, and the most retired springs of action, and consequently will reward us, not according to that we seem to be, but according to what we really are.

We may possibly acquire a favourable opinion of men, and be greatly interested in their affections, by disguising ourselves with the form of godliness, and by our specious pretensions to piety; but remember, that the God with whom we have to do, sees through all the coverings of hypocrisy, and the superficial performances of religion: so that however artfully men may conceal their vices, or cover their villanies with the solemn appearance of sanctity, yet their dissimulations are ever open to God's all-seeing eye, which makes them appear more deformed, and more detestable in his sight, who requires truth in the inward parts.

Would we then approve ourselves to God, and avoid the bitter reproaches of conscience, we must throw off the fair
masks

When we are thus happily qualified to be useful members of society, then will God Almighty delight to do us good, make us happy in ourselves, great in our king, and we shall be the glorious instruments of establishing, in this our island, peace and happiness, truth and justice, real religion, and undissembled piety, to the latest generations. The observation of the aforesaid duties would have prevented all the miseries, and mischiefs that are in the world ; and the practising this unexceptionable rule of *doing to others as we would have them do to us*, will procure us peace and tranquillity here, and prepare us for those immense regions of light, in the boundless realms of futurity, where nothing that is false or treacherous, cruel, or inhuman, has entered, or ever will enter.

The consideration of these things, should make us act agreeable to this divine model ; that we may come to God with a heart purified

masks of deceit, and cultivate integrity of heart and life, and a mind alienated from an inordinate love of the world, and all the pleasures and vanities thereof, without this there is nothing else will recommend us to God, or procure us a rational hope in his mercy, for religion dwells not in external solemnities, but has its temple seated in the heart, and resides in the inmost recesses of the soul, therefore christians should aim at inward purity, and make it the constant object of their desires, or they will so deceive their own souls, that they will sink under the weight of their iniquities, and into the unfathomable depths of destruction.

rified from evil. All who thus come shall find comfort here, be introduced to the pure assembly above, and rest eternally in the spacious realms of glory, and in the regions of uninterrupted felicity.

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, inconceivably great and almighty being, the only wise God, be all honour and glory, adoration and praise, through Christ Jesus, for ever and ever. Amen.

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